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COMMERCIAL REPORT

ALTHOUGH the produce of land bore a sufficiently high price amply to compensate the farmer, and from the demand arising from the English market, being completely open to exportations from this country, likely to continue so, yet to please the landed interest, the distillation from grain is now permitted in Ireland. Many of our Irish members fully co-operated in this measure, although some of them formerly, from a desire to encourage sobriety, had discountenanced the extension of the distillery-system, but now private interest was preferred to the advancement of morality, because many of these men were the owners of land, and because they feared the deficiency in the revenue, arising from the distilleries would be made up by other taxes. The lowering the duty on whiskey may probably answer the purpose of putting down illicit distillation, but from the low price of whiskey, drunkenness, which was already a wide-spreading evil, is likely to be further increased. A country is in a miserable situation, when its expenditure is so great, that to obtain relief from a part of the incumbent pressure, morals are sacrificed to an increase of revenue.

In another point of view, nothing is gained by a tax raised in a manner so as to corrupt the morals of the people. The state loses more from lessening the productive labour of industry, than is gained by a taxation raised on immorality. The real wealth of a country consists in well-directed labour, of which sobriety only is capable.

In England, the prohibition on distillation from grain, still continues, and considering the possibility of scarcity, and the uncertainty of foreign supplies, it appears to be a wise measure of precaution. Yet probably many voted for the prohibition, not from these motives, but to encourage the West India trade. The planters and merchants in that trade, find it is a losing speculation. Yet the planters have brought most of their distresses on themselves, by imprudence in managing their estates, and their wasteful luxury. In this abstracted point of view, they are not entitled to compensation from other classes of the community. They deserve to smart under the evils, which they have brought on themselves.

Such is the present unsettled state of trade, and speculation has so deranged its former fixed habits, that almost every article is in a state of uncertainty. Dash and speculation have been the order of the day. The rash speculators, in many instances, by such practices, which must, on the principles of strict justice, be pronounced dishonest, have ruined not only themselves, but involved their acquaintances and connexions in trade, in similar ruin.

Many bankruptcies have taken place, and many more are expected, and yet ministers tell us, trade is flourishing. The present difficulties in trade will probably be still further increased by the new restrictions of Bonaparte, to exclude British articles from the continent of Europe. He appears resolved to exert all the powers of his capacious mind, and to employ his vast and gigantic military force to exclude us and our produce almost entirely from those countries, over which, by one means or another, he possesses unlimited sway. Nothing is yet known with certainty, in regard to the issue of our impolitic disputes with the United States of North America.

A bill is in progress through parliament, to lay a duty of 15 per cent on foreign linens, brought into Great Britain for exportation. The linen merchants of Glasgow have been active in petitioning the board of trade, to procure an act of parliament for this purpose, and at their request, the linendrapers of Belfast, likewise petitioned through the Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer. The principle of such interference is not strictly justifiable in enlarged policy. The less statesmen interfere in matters of trade, it is the better. Besides, these applications to great men, often introduce a cringing servility, and flatters the prejudices of such people, as if they were better acquainted with the interests of trade, than those who are immediately concerned. Hence, they are ever ready to interfere, and their interference is often extremely prejudicial. In their efforts to afford the show of help, they often do much mischief. Of this, a striking instance occurred last year. To remedy a deficiency of flaxseed, brought on by impolitic orders in council, the oil-stores in England were opened, bad flaxseed was branded, a bounty of 5s. per bushel paid on it; when brought to this country, the seed did not grow, and the people lost their crop. Such is the sample of the interference of boards with affairs of trade.

Little variation in the rates of exchange has taken place during this month, but the discount on bank notes is rather lower, being from 1½ to 2 per cent.

FLAX CROPS, 1809.

GENERAL RETURN of the Flax Land in the following Counties in Ireland, for the year 1809, showing the number of Acres sown with Irish Flaxseed...the number of acres sown with foreign Flaxseed...the number of persons who intend claiming the bounty for saving Flaxseed...and the quantity of Land they had under Flax

COUNTY.	Number of persons who raised Flax.	Number of acres sown with Irish Flaxseed.	Number of acres sown with foreign Flaxseed.	Total number of acres, Irish statute measure.	Number of persons who intend claiming bounty for saving Flaxseed	Quantity of land they had under Flax.
		A. R. P.	A. R. P.	A. R. P.		A. R. P.
ULSTER.						
Antrim,	10552	115 0 0	1998 0 3	2113 0 30	66	187 1 10
Armagh,	421	71 3 3	4215 2 21	4287 1 30	6	29 0 0
Londonderry	8478	59 0 0	4118 3 0	4177 3 0	4	25 1 0
Tyrone,	10241	81 3 34	3458 2 1	3540 1 35	3713	1341 3 12
Donegal,	6708	239 0 0	4148 2 0	4437 2 0		
Fermagh,	566	3 0 0	112 2 0	115 2 0	6	5 1 0
Monaghan,	9951	8 3 0	2572 3 0	2581 2 0	5863	1674 3 0
Cavan,	2595	1 2 20	443 0 16	444 2 30	1419	181 0 31
Down,	2451	82 2 30	1050 2 20	1433 1 10	479	333 1 30
	55943	712 3 7	22118 2 8	22831 1 15	11256	3778 0 3
LEINSTER.						
Meath,	1021		370 0 15	370 0 15	1	5 0 0
Louth and Drogheda,	3243	459 1 38	793 3 2	1253 1 0	683	375 1 27
King's co.	1385	12 0 8	221 2 30	233 2 38	296	63 1 6
Longford,	7946		1346 2 33	1346 2 33	25	3 1 33
Kildare and Wicklow,	257	1 3 0	31 2 0	33 1 0	2	3 0 0
Queen's co.	183	5 0 21	13 3 22	19 0 3		
Kilkenny,	160		55 1 0	55 1 0	7	3 1 0
Westmeath,	2457	12 1 9	792 1 13	804 2 22	155	86 2 26
Carlow and Wexford,	526	45 3 0	55 1 0	101 0 0		
Dublin,	no return.					
	17178	536 1 36	3680 1 35	4216 3 31	1169	540 0 12
MUNSTER.						
Cork,	2373		880 2 20	880 2 20	1141	510 3 30
Clare,	45	7 2 0	12 0 0	19 2 0	18	5 3 0
Limerick,	958		643 3 34	643 3 34	196	88 2 1
Kerry,	no return.					
Tipperary,	222	16 1 0	101 1 0	117 2 0	215	108 2 0
Waterford,	465	8 3 5	6 2 13	13 2 20		
	4063	32 2 5	1644 2 29	1677 0 34	1570	713 2 31
CONNAUGHT.						
Sligo,	5192	15 2 2	668 1 37	684 0 21		
Mayo,	7770	48 2 19	1129 2 25	1178 1 4	3991	696 0 19
Galway,	1913	17 3 0	1177 2 0	1195 1 0		
Leitrim,	5077		1563 3 2	1563 3 2		
Roscommon,	4595	6 3 30	1700 2 3	1707 1 33		
	24547	88 3 13	6211 3 27	6300 3 20	3991	696 0 19
GRAND TOTAL.	101751					
	Persons.	Irish Seed.	Foreign Seed.	Total Acres.	Persons for bounty.	Quantity of Land.
		A. R. P.	A. R. P.	A. R. P.		A. R. P.
	101751	1970 3 1	3685 2 19	35056 1 20	17986	5727 3 35

December, 28, 1809.

C. and C. Duffin, Inspectors General.